

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Application ID: 14AC158062

Program Name: Virginia Veterans Corps

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant states a significant programmatic focus as they are statutorily required to coordinate and facilitate the behavioral and rehabilitation needs of Virginia's veterans and their families.

The applicant provides data of Virginia's high national ranking in various veteran classifications with the expectation of increasing veterans in the future.

The applicant provides national and regional data to support these areas of need as well as referencing the Veterans Administration estimate of "only about 55% access care."

The applicant includes data indicating 60% of homeless veterans in Central, Southside and Greater Hampton Roads, which are included as target areas, as the makeup of the homeless population statewide.

The applicant provides data from the Department of Veterans Affairs, which indicates that 55% of veterans eligible for services actually seek care.

The applicant also includes a 2013 Virginia Point in Time survey which shows that 719 Virginia veterans were homeless during the month of January and 625 reside in transitional housing and shelters.

The applicant presents suitable information for using AmeriCorps members as Navigators. The applicant is assigning eight half-time AmeriCorps members to providing services to at risk or homeless veterans.

The assignment of AmeriCorps members as Navigators appears to be a highly beneficial point of access for both the applicant and the veterans and their families who will receive services.

Navigators have a large and wide variety of avenues of access to outreach to veterans and their families thereby

increasing the probability of a successive interaction.

According to the applicant, 28 half-time AmeriCorps members will assist veterans with access to financial support, behavioral health service and linkage to housing and employment. Through this strategy, the applicant will serve approximately 7,000 military-connected individuals and families.

During 2012 – 2013, the applicant indicates that 1,227 were served and nearly 16,800 service hours were dedicated to military-affiliated individuals and families.

Weaknesses:

The problem is defined as the high number of veterans from WWII till the present; an elevated number of veterans residing in VA are an unconvincing reason to demonstrate how severe the problem really is.

The applicant clearly describes an elevated number of volunteers fulfilling their program needs; the needs for AmeriCorps members under half-time status are unclear and unsupported.

The applicant presents a logic model and narrative where many AmeriCorps members are placed into programs where veterans and their families do not qualify for their assistance (Armed Services, YMCA & Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society); the lack of equal services to at risk target population (veterans and their families) entails limited outputs and outcomes.

It is unclear whether the half-time program members will successfully assist the targeted population while the number of volunteers performing the same activities is significantly higher; a redundancy of volunteer personnel is well-documented.

The applicant states success with previous performance, but the description of how the past performance was achieved is not explained.

The applicant states they have experience working with veterans but offers insufficient quantitative or qualitative metrics regarding their previous experience.